

## Article by Alexander Graham Bell, August 15, 1904

August 15, '04.

My father in the last of his Lowell lectures on Shakespeare had branched off and given an account of his system of visible speech and among the purposes for which it might be used, he had mentioned teaching the deaf to speak. Sarah Fuller who had just been elected Principal of Horace Mann School was in the audience and afterward at her suggestion one of the Board of Education called upon him to ask for particulars. He said that teaching the deaf to speak was not his idea but his son's who had devoted much time to working out a method and was very hopeful of results. My father said nothing to me on his return from Boston as he did not wish to disturb me, but all the winter he was corresponding with the school Board in Boston. In March I was startled to receive a letter from them stating that a handsome appropriation had been made to enable me to teach the teachers my father's system and to make experiments with children. The Board invited me for two months.

I had formed a conviction some years before that the deaf could be made to speak and had already before leaving London experimented at a private school — Miss Hall's. Children learn to speak by unconscious imitation, those that can hear imitate through the sense of hearing. Deaf-mutes are dumb because being deaf they cannot hear speech and thus have nothing to imitate. Their vocal organs are all right. I reasoned that persons who could not hear could not hear could imitate through the sense of sight, in other words by copying the motion of the vocal organs in speech as pictured by the symbols of Visible Speech. I had taught the deaf children at Miss Hall's these symbols and had been so successful that on my arrival in Canada, I had written Dr. Peet, the Principal of the New York Institution offering my services for nothing for some months if they would engage me.

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I never heard from him, but he described my plan and recommended me at a teachers convention some time later.